Does Your Mother Know?

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Does Your Mother Know?

by SinnamonSpider

Summary

It's a balmy Saturday morning in May when Martha realizes her son is in love with Lex Luthor.

Notes

Set somewhere in S1, but I don't know where. Later, since it's arbitrarily May. I continue to reject the idea that any of them were younger than 16 in S1, so that's how old Clark is here. If you make your premise completely unbelievable, I will choose not to believe it.

I love Martha. I think she's much more well-rounded than Jonathan. She's smart, observant, practical. I think I've done a pretty good job with her here.

Title from the ABBA song, which is way too light-hearted for the plot. Oh well.

Feedback is always appreciated, especially as I'm still new to the fandom!

It's a balmy Saturday morning in May when Martha realizes her son is in love with Lex Luthor.

They're in the kitchen, Clark working his way through his third bowl of cereal, when Jonathan comes in wiping his hands on a rag, looking like he'd stepped in something out in the barn.

“Lex *Luthor* is outside.” Jonathan always emphasizes Lex's last name, like a reminder to all of them not to forget who they're dealing with. “In yet another of his Eurotrash sports cars.”

Clark's spoon clatters loudly against his bowl and he looks up, and suddenly all Martha can hear is the rush of blood in her own ears.

Oh.

She knows the expression on Clark's face, and it goes beyond excitement to see a friend, or even that friend's expensive car.

It's the same expression that her husband had worn on their first date, when she came out of her dorm building in Metropolis to meet him at his truck. He still gets that look on his face when she comes downstairs for one of their rare nights out in the city.

Jonathan and Clark may not be related by blood, but there are a lot of similarities between them.

Oh God.

She shakes her head once and the world starts to turn again.

“Awesome,” Clark is saying, eyes bright, “it must be the new Ferrari. He just got it last week.”

“The *new* Ferrari,” Jonathan echoes, disgusted. “What was wrong with the old one? Colour out of date? Did it get rained on?”

“Actually, he didn't like the sound the turn signals made,” Clark says, swallowing the milky remains of the rest of the cereal and dropping the bowl in the sink. Martha can't tell if he's joking or not.

Neither can Jonathan, who splutters and is no doubt searching for a reason to bar Clark from going outside, but even without superspeed, Clark is already out the screen door.

Martha follows him.

Clark bounds down the steps to where Lex is leaning against the driver's side door of a cherry red car. He's tugging off one black leather driving glove, mirrored sunglasses blocking his eyes. He looks like something out of a Vogue magazine shoot, especially when his face splits with a dazzling grin.

“Told you I'd bring her around.” His voice is low, intimate, so much so that Martha can barely hear it. But Lex always speaks like that, moderated and calm.

Clark circles the car in the same way Jonathan circles a new horse he's buying, eyes roving over the shiny surfaces. His face is rapt and maybe she was overthinking it, maybe it was all about the car. Men are funny about cars.

Her eyes shift to Lex, who raises his sunglasses to perch on his head, and he's watching Clark with the same intensity and her heart rate starts to kick up again.

Oh no.

Lex notices her on the porch and gives her a little wave, a polite smile. But he drops his sunglasses back over his eyes, as if he knows he's been caught.

Oh God.

She barely remembers to wave back before retreating back into the kitchen.

She sinks into her chair at the table, staring blankly through the window where, thankfully, she can't see what's going on outside.

Jonathan is rifling through the fridge, emerging with the orange juice. “I don't want Clark in that car with that lunatic,” he says, splashing juice everywhere in his annoyance. “God knows where he learned to drive. If he learned at all.”

She blinks, looks at him. She doesn't want Clark in the car with Lex either, though Lex's driving skills - or lack thereof - are no longer her primary concern. Still - “Jonathan, we've talked about this. We can't forbid him from being friends with Lex.”

She's even more sure of this than before. They don't need a Romeo and Juliet situation on their hands. Clark is a good boy, he always has been, but...

Jonathan snorts, but doesn't reply.

Heavy footsteps on the porch stairs, and the screen door bangs open. Jonathan frowns. “Clark, be careful.”

“Sorry, Dad.” Clark looks appropriately contrite for all of two seconds. “Lex is gonna let me take the car for a spin, is that okay?”

“A spin?" Jonathan is incredulous. "Isn't that thing a stick shift?”

Clark shrugs. “Yeah, but he's been teaching me on the Porsche.”

Martha has a sudden vision of the two of them in the Porsche - a tiny, snug little thing - with Lex's hand over Clark's on the gearshift, leaning close to watch his foot on the clutch.

Oh no.

“Oh, of course,” Jonathan says, close enough to a sneer that she breaks out of her reverie to frown at him. “Teaching you on the *Porsche*, why didn't I think of that?”

“Jonathan,” she warns. The excitement and pride are slipping off Clark's face.

“Dad - ”

“I don't want you in those fast cars with Lex *Luthor* behind the wheel!”

“Well,” Clark reasons, “if he's teaching me, then technically he's not behind the wheel. I am.”

Jonathan slams his hand on the table, making the dishes rattle. “Clark, he nearly killed you, have you forgotten?”

“Jonathan!”

Clark's eyebrows are knitting together, but his voice is controlled. “Dad. I'm not the one who nearly died.”

Jonathan opens his mouth, but then looks to her. She shakes her head firmly. If he says the next words that she knows are on the tip of his tongue…

His face softens, grudgingly. “Clark, I just don't trust him.”

Clark shrugs again. “Do you trust me?”

Oh God.

Jonathan sighs. “Of course I do.”

The battle is won, and Clark knows it. “Then trust me,” he says, face brightening. In two strides, his hand is on the doorknob. He pauses and looks at his father.

“Don't spend all day out there,” Jonathan warns, defeated. “You've got chores.”

Clark whoops and gallops out the door.

“And no speeding!” Jonathan yells after him, throwing his hands up in the air. He stalks out of the kitchen, heading upstairs.

Martha follows Clark out onto the porch.

He's at Lex's side already, one big hand on the back of his neck, clearly embarrassed. It's not unlikely that Lex heard the entire conversation. “Sorry about the domestic,” Clark says.

Lex smiles. “Your parents care about you, Clark. That's nothing to be ashamed of.” He still has the sunglasses on, so it's hard to tell, but it looks like he's looking at her now.

Oh.

Lex pulls the keys from his pocket and tosses them high in the air for Clark to catch. “C'mon, you've got chores, so no time to waste.”

Yes, he'd definitely heard the whole thing.

Clark snatches the keys from the air and opens the driver's side door, ducking into the low space. Lex crouches down, showing him how to adjust the seat, before rising and closing the door. He goes around the hood to the passenger side, and now he's plainly looking at her.

“Be…safe,” she says weakly, the words carrying more weight than they would have previously. It's not permission, she tells herself. Just precaution.

Lex raises the sunglasses. His eyes are intent, knowing. “You have my word,” he says seriously.

It doesn't reassure her.

Then he's opening the passenger door and sliding in. Through the windscreen, she can see his pale head lean close to Clark's dark one, see his lips move as he gives instruction, see Clark glance at them before refocusing on whatever he should be looking at.

Oh no.

The car starts with a throaty purr, and eases slowly backwards until it reaches the turn, backing up and straightening out and then it's gone, past the barn where she can't see it anymore.

Later that evening, she goes to the mansion.

Clark had returned no worse for wear, as far as anyone could tell, with his eyes bright and his colour high, but when she asks him how it went, he flushes brighter and just says “Good.”

Cagey, where Clark is normally expansive, and Jonathan had been in the barn so no need to spare him any details. She looks him over carefully, but there are no signs of anything untoward. No marks on him (but then there wouldn't be, would there?), no inside out clothes.

Clark pleads homework and goes out to the loft. Martha takes the truck keys and drives.

On the way, she thinks about Lex Luthor.

Growing up in Metropolis, the Luthors were everywhere. She had even gone to Lionel and Lillian's wedding - although she doubts either of them ever knew it - as the date of her college roommate's cousin, who worked at some relatively high level at Luthorcorp.

The ruling family of Metropolis was unavoidable, and she'd read the news of Lex's birth in the doctor's office, waiting, unknowingly, to find out that she would have no children of her own. The front page of the *Daily Planet*, with a beautiful but staid photo of Lionel and Lillian, baby Alexander a tiny blue bundle in Lillian's arms, had ended up crinkled and warped from the tears she had cried over it.

Once she was in Smallville, the Luthors got less coverage in the *Smallville Ledger*, pushed to the News From Metropolis page near the middle by things more important to a small town, like feed prices and state fair prize winners.

Then: the meteor shower.

The entire thing had been so surreal, but no point moreso than being crammed in the borrowed truck between Jonathan and Lionel, the little boy they'd - *found* - sitting happily on her lap, reaching out towards the crumpled form of Lex Luthor, curled in his father's arms. Lex's shocking red hair was almost entirely gone, his pale scalp exposed. Lionel looked supremely uncomfortable, especially when the little boy's hand caressed Lex's bared head and down his cheek.

After the meteor shower - and Luthorcorp's purchase of the Ross's factory - the *Ledger* had upped their coverage of the Luthors considerably. Martha had read about Julian's death first, then Lillian's, her heart breaking for the boy in the front page photo, standing at his mother's grave with his father clutching his shoulder, looming over his son in a way that looked less than comforting.

She remembers, now, how Clark had looked at the paper, running one small finger over the image of Lex.

Luthorcorp and Lionel were not popular in Smallville, and the press caught the scent of blood in the water as Lex got older. Clark had been around eight when the first scandals started breaking, splashy photos of the now teenaged heir to the Luthor fortune snapped outside nightclubs and in alleyways in Metropolis, New York, London. Lurid headlines announced underage drinking, drug allegations, and in one salacious instance, three counts of solicitation in a seedy part of Gotham City. The town had absolutely buzzed about that one for days, while Martha looked at the grainy images of Lillian's son, pale and miserable with blank eyes, and felt only pity. She kept the papers well-hidden from Clark.

Despite his troubles, Lex went off to Princeton one fall and the *Ledger* printed the odd story about him, but with less frequency. Eventually, the only coverage was snapshots of him with the current girl of the week - sometimes more than one - and a snarky caption, but the tone had shifted to highlight the antics of a billionaire playboy, rather than a troubled child gone off the rails.

And then, suddenly, he was back on the front page of the *Ledger*- no doubt the *Planet* as well, although Martha didn't subscribe any longer - looking sullen and sour under a headline that screamed about disgrace and exile: to Smallville. Lionel had seemingly had enough of his son's bad press, and was attempting to bury him in the fertilizer factory.

Lex had quietly moved into the mansion - another front page for the *Ledger*- taken up his post at the factory, and generally kept his head

down.

Until he'd run his Porsche into her son and sent them both into the dark waters that rushed under Loeb Bridge.

Jonathan had been incensed for weeks - she'd had to stop him from driving out to the mansion with his shotgun - but Martha could only think of that young boy lying in Lionel's lap in the truck, pale and bloodied by the same meteors that had brought Clark to them. If there could be any blame laid at Clark's feet for what happened in the meteor shower - and she couldn't blame him, not ever, but she knew he blamed himself for it, even if he didn't say it outright - then he had absolved himself of it by ripping the roof off the car and pulling Lillian Luthor's son from the river, breathing life back into him on the rocky bank.

She'd known then that Lex Luthor would become an indelible part of her son's life. She just hadn't expected it to be like *this*.

She waits awkwardly in the foyer as the security team checks with Lex, and then she's escorted through the dark halls by one of the hulking guards.

“Martha Kent,” the man says. “You Clark's mama?”

She nods. He grins. “Tell him Ricky says hey.”

“I - sure, I'll tell him,” she struggles. She knows Clark spends quite a bit of time at the mansion, but to be on a first name basis with the staff…

Ricky stops before a set of double doors and opens one, motioning her through.

“Thanks, Rick,” Lex says, and the door closes behind her.

He's seated behind a desk in front of a huge stained glass window. The setting sun streams through the windowpanes, making beautiful patterns on the desk, the walls, bathing him in coloured light. He's typing on a laptop, but lowers the screen quickly and rises to greet her.

“Mrs Kent,” he says, something that isn't quite a smile tilting his full lips. He steps around from the desk. “Can I get you a drink?”

There's a glass bar a few steps away, and while she feels like some

whiskey wouldn't be amiss, she shakes her head. “No, thank you.”

He motions to a set of leather couches in front of the unlit fireplace. “Please.”

She sinks onto one and he sits across from her. She studies him, and knows he's doing the same.

He's grown up handsome, she notes, despite the baldness - or maybe because of it. It's striking, to be sure, and makes the rest of his features even moreso. His eyes are the same blue-grey as his mother's, although the slate coloured dress shirt he's wearing makes them look more grey. Knowing that his hair had been red, also like Lillian's, she searches for any hints of his father. There's something around the jaw and the nose that lean towards Lionel, but Lex is missing the sharp leonine features. He's softer, gentler.

Any sharpness is left to his eyes and his overall bearing. Lionel's intelligence, surely - maybe even exceeding it - and other traits that would have been hammered into him from a young age: tenacity, calculation, a definite bend towards ruthlessness. A prizefighter’s eye for weighing up an opponent, identifying weaknesses, the best ways to go in for the kill. She wonders how much of this had come naturally to Lex and how much had needed to be shaped, honed, until any of his natural softness had hardened into stone. She remembers, with a pang of pity, that he's barely in his early twenties. Still so young.

Then he smiles at her.

Oh.

The smile reaches his eyes, warm and genuine, and this will have been what Clark sees. If it's an act, it's a masterful one.

“Mrs Kent, I think I know why you're here,” he says gently.

She laughs, surprising them both. “Lex, I don't even know if I know why I'm here.” She twists her hands together, nervous where she'd meant to be calm. He's putting her off-balance, without even really doing anything. Probably another Luthor trait.

She takes a deep breath. “Clark - ” she starts, then breaks off. Lex waits patiently. It's clear he won't take pity on her. It's not the way he's been taught.

She tries again. “Clark is - very young.”

She won't say he's underage: she knows what the age of consent is. She also knows that Lex will know. Legally, she doesn't have a leg to stand on.

“He's never had a girlfriend.” She swallows hard, pushes on. “Or a boyfriend.”

A wry twist of his lips at that addition, but no comment. “Not even Lana?” he asks.

Her turn to smile, a bit bitterly. “I think you'd know better than me at this point,” because she knows Lex has given Clark advice about Lana, but now she wonders what kind of advice it was, “but no, nothing. He's been in - well, puppy love with her, forever, but she's been with Whitney for ages. And lately…he doesn't seem to talk about her as much.” She realizes how true it is even as she says it; how often Lex's name has replaced Lana's in the course of Clark's conversations. How could she not have noticed until now?

There's a flash of triumph on Lex's face - fleeting, but visible and oh, his father would have never given that one away. Lex is good: he's very good, and in a few years he'll be formidable. But right now, he's still young and he's just given himself away.

“Mrs Kent,” Lex says seriously, leaning forward. “I give you my word that nothing has happened between Clark and myself.”

The same line as earlier, outside the farmhouse. She believes him, but that's not the whole story. “But not that nothing will happen, at some point.”

He sighs. “No. I don't want to make promises that…might not be kept.” He's delicate with it, treading lightly, assigning no blame. “But I can assure you that I care about your son very much.” Something else passes over his face, something she can't pin down. "I know that his destiny and mine are entwined."

It's sweet, innocent, non-specific, and she's sure that's how he means it to sound, but it does nothing to allay her concerns. “I'm - Lex, I'm not questioning your…feelings. I'm just - this is not Metropolis.” She hesitates. “Smallville will be a difficult place for Clark - or you - to be…different.”

Clark is already different enough, but of course she can't say that.

Lex tilts his head. “You're not wrong. But I think we both know that

Clark is already different."

Oh God.

"He's very mature," Lex goes on, "and very intelligent. He's miles ahead of his peers, in a lot of ways. You've raised a remarkable son." A beat, and then begrudgingly, "You and Mr Kent."

There's something in that line of thinking that she doesn't quite like, but the feeling of relief at Lex not knowing just how different Clark truly is overwhelms everything else. And then there's -

"Jonathan." She doesn't realize she's said it out loud until Lex presses his lips together, like he's trying to avoid speaking. "He won't - this will not go over well."

"He hates me," Lex says lightly, but there's a faint edge of pain there. Lex wants Jonathan's respect, she suddenly sees, and that's another thing that Lionel wouldn't have let slip; another thing he'll get better at hiding with time. A pang goes through her. She knows why he would seek to mend fences with Jonathan - fences that were broken long before Lex had anything to do with it - but she also knows that the likelihood of that happening is low. Especially if Jonathan finds out that Lex is in love with their son, and that the feeling is mutual.

She won't insult him by denying it outright, but she tries to soften it. "It's not your fault, Lex. But he won't like this."

Lex laughs bitterly. "Of course not. Tell me," and the pain is sharper, more noticeable, "which do you think will be worse for him? Finding out that his son has feelings for another man? Or finding out that it's *me*?"

She doesn't answer. Clark being gay would rock Jonathan to his core, she knows - but she has faith that if he can get past the spaceship in the storm cellar, he can get past anything.

Anything aside from a Luthor.

Lex slumps back against the couch, rubbing a hand over his mouth ruefully. He looks tired, hurt. She feels for him. "Lex…"

He straightens and meets her eyes. "Mrs Kent, if you ask me to cut ties with Clark, I will."

The rest of his sentence goes unspoken, but she doesn't need to

imagine what it was. She's already come to the same conclusion, this morning in the kitchen. “No. Clark - won't stand for it, I know.”

Under the pain still written on Lex's face, that earlier triumph is back. He knows, just as well as Martha does, who would win in a battle for Clark's choice. She also thinks (prays, hopes) that he knows it would be a hollow victory. Despite his issues with his own family, Lex doesn't want Clark to have to pick between him and his parents.

But there are boundaries needed, at least in theory. “All I ask is that you're respectful of the fact that Clark is still in high school. Regardless of any…legalities, it puts both him and yourself in a precarious position.”

He nods. “I agree. I'm well aware of my reputation, in Smallville and points further. I don't intend to let it tarnish Clark.”

And how will you stop that from happening, she wonders. “Also, I'm going to request that you both keep things discreet around Jonathan, until I can find a way to have a discussion with him.”

“That won't result in me on the business end of a shotgun, I hope.” His tone is light, joking, but his eyes are serious. *And how will you stop that from happening,* she knows he's wondering.

She gathers up her handbag. “I hope so too, for all our sakes.” She stands, and Lex stands with her. Some hysterical part of her wants to shake his hand, now that the business is concluded. She makes a fist to resist the urge, and heads for the door.

“Mrs Kent.”

She looks back. He's still by the couches, hasn't followed her. His face is cracked open wide, wider than she's seen this whole time. He hesitates, then speaks.

“I'm sorry that it's me.”

He sounds it, too, voice heavy with pain to match his eyes.

She thinks back to this morning, to Clark's face, to all the other times she's seen him around Lex: times she'll now need to reshape in her mind. Now that she knows, it's plain as day. Despite it all - her own misgivings, Jonathan's hatred - Clark is *happy*.

She smiles at him. “I'm not.”

He looks surprised as she turns away and leaves the office.

Just over a week later, she heads to the barn in search of her pickling jars. Later, she'll assure herself that she hadn't seen the red Ferrari parked outside. It had been dark, after all.

Voices above her head, in the loft. She freezes, listening.

“Your mother came to see me the other day.”

A scoff. “She shouldn't have done that.” Bitter, more bitter than she's used to with Clark. It stings.

If she moves slowly, silently, a few steps to the left, she'll be able to see them without them seeing her. Unless Clark uses his x-ray vision, for some reason.

The creak of springs in the old couch. From her new vantage point, she sees Lex sit down next to Clark, close enough that her heart constricts. It had been easy enough to accept in Lex's office, with him standing before her, uncertain and apologetic. It's different here, with him next to her son, close and tempting. The sting sharpens.

“Don't say that,” Lex admonishes gently. “She's worried. And she's right to be.”

Clark sighs. “It's not her business. Or my dad's. I'm not a kid.”

Lex touches his face fondly.

Oh no.

“You're not an adult, legally, and you're living under their roof. That makes it their business,” Lex points out, reasonable.

Clark turns his head and catches Lex's thumb between his lips. She hears Lex inhale.

Oh God.

Lex pulls his hand away, thumb shining wet in the weak light. Clark licks his lips. “Did she tell you to stay away from me?”

“Would I be here if she had?”

Clark's jaw firms. “Lex. I don't - they can't keep me from you.” He's all

teenage conviction, Juliet defiant.

Lex huffs a sardonic laugh, but doesn't correct him. There's no point in arguing. “Clark, I know how important your family is to you. That's a good thing, trust me.” He pauses, and there's a note of sadness as he goes on. “Don't throw it away for me. I couldn't live with myself.”

Oh.

The couch springs squeak again as Clark pushes closer to him. “I won't. But I won't throw you away either.” He puts a hand on Lex's jaw, leans in and presses their lips together.

Lex melts into the kiss, his own hand coming up to card through Clark's hair and -

She turns away, holding her breath. Steals on quiet feet out of the barn. Doesn't exhale until she's past the Ferrari.

Oh God.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!